

# KAMALA DAS AS A CONFESSIONAL POET

KAMALA DAS POETRY IS CONFESSIONAL . K.R.S. IYENGER REMARKS: 'HER CONFESSIONAL POETRY HAS BEEN COMPARED WITH THAT OF ANNE SEXTON, SYLVIA PLATH AND JUDITH WRIGHT. HER LONG COMPOSITION IS A SUSTAINED EXERCISE IN SELF-EXPOSURE.....'. THE POETESS HERSELF SAYS ,

I ALSO KNOW THAT BY CONFESSING

BY FEELING OFF MY LAYERS

I REACH CLOSER TO THE SOUL.....

I SHALL SOME DAY SEE

MY WORLD DE-FLASHED, DE-VEINED, DE-BLOODED.....

LIKE OTHER CONFESSIONAL POETS: NISSIM EZEKIEL, AND A.K. RAMANUJAN, KAMALA DAS MAKES HER OWN LIFE, HER PERSONAL EMOTIONAL EXPERIENCE, DISILLUSIONMENTS AND FRUSTRATIONS THE CENTRE OF HER POETRY. AS A TRUE CONFESSIONAL POETESS SHE EXHIBITS WITH REMARKABLE FRANKNESS THE WRONGS, INJUSTICE AND HUMILIATION THAT SHE SUFFERED IN THE MALE ORIENTED WORLD. SEXUAL HUMILIATION AND EXPLOITATION, AS WE HAVE ALREADY DISCUSSED IS ONE OF THE MAIN THEMES IN HER POETRY. HER POETRY RECORDS HER EXPERIENCES AND STRUGGLES SHE HAD TO UNDERGO IN ORDER TO MAINTAIN HER IDENTITY. PEOPLE INSTRUCTED HER NOT TO USE ENGLISH BUT SHE VAHEMENTLY ASSERTED HER PERSONALITY AND CHOICE BY DISCARDING ALL SUGGESTIONS PUT TO HER:

I AM AN INDIAN, VERY BROWN, BORN IN,

MALABAR, I SPEAK THREE LANGUAGES WRITE IN

TWO, DREAM IN ONE. DON'T WRITE IN ENGLISH, THEY SAID

ENGLISH IS NOT YOUR TONGUE. WHY NOT LEAVE

ME ALONE, CRITICS, FRIENDS, VISITING COUSINS

EVERY ONE OF YOU? WHY NOT LET ME SPEAK IN  
ANY LANGUAGE I LIKE? THE LANGUAGE I SPEAK IS  
ALL MINE, MINE ALONE.

IMAGES OF DECAY, DEATH AND DISINTEGRATION CHARACTERISE CONFESSIONAL  
POETRY. KAMALA DAS POETRY REVEALS ALL THESE ASPECTS. THE POETESS FAILS  
TO SYNTHESIZE THE INNER AND THE OUTER, THE BODY AND THE SOUL. SO SHE  
THINKS OF DEATH:

O SEA, I AM FED UP  
I WANT TO BE SIMPLE  
I WANT TO BE LOVED  
AND  
IF LOVE IS NOT TO BE HAD  
I WANT TO BE DEAD, JUST DEAD.

KAMALA DAS POETRY HAS A STRONG NOT OF SUBJECTIVISM:- THE SAME SORT OF  
SUBJECTIVISM AS WE WITNESS IN THE ROMANTIC POETS OF ENGLAND ( IN  
SHELLEY AND KEATS PARTICULARLY ). THE POETESS IS MOSTLY CONCERNED WITH  
HERSELF AS A VICTIM OF CIRCUMSTANCES AND SEXUAL HUMILIATIONS. ALL HER  
POETRY IS AN EXPRESSION OF HER PRIVATE EXPERIENCES IN MATTERS OF LOVE  
AND SEX. IT OPERATES FROM THE LEVEL OF THE PERSONAL AND THE PARTICULAR  
RATHER THAN FROM THAT OF THE GENERAL AND THE UNIVERSAL. THERE IS A  
STRONG AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL TOUCH IN IT. THUS IN SUMMER IN CALCUTTA, WE  
HAVE THE POEM " THE DANCE OF EUNUCHS " WHICH CORRESPONDS TO HER  
OWN FEELING OF PERSECUTION AND INADEQUACY. THE EUNUCHS ARE DEPICTED  
AS UNDER :

SOME BEAT THEIR DRUM; OTHER BEAT THEIR SORRY BREASTS  
AND WAILED, AND WRITHED IN VACANT ECTASY. THEY  
WERE THIN IN LIMBS AND DRY; LIKE HALF-BURNT LOGS FROM  
FUNERAL PYRES, A DROUGHT AND A ROTTENESS  
WERE IN EACH OF THEM.

IN LOVE IS A FINE LYRICS IN SUMMER IN CALCUTTA. IT DEALS WITH THE TENSION  
BETWEEN LOVE AND LUST IT REVEALS THE WORKING OF FEMININE  
COUNSIOUSNESS. TRUE LOVE IS SPIRITUAL. THE POEM IS CONFESSIONAL AND  
BIOGRAPHICAL. THE POETESS SAYS THAT THE LOVER INDULGES ONLY IN SEX  
ACTS. “ HIS SKIN COMMUNICATED THINGS. HOW ABOMINABLE HE IS

O WHAT DOES BURNING MOUTH  
OF SUN, BURNING IN TODAY’S  
SKY REMIND ME.”

ALMOST ALL HER POEMS ARE CONFESSIONAL. CONFESSIONAL POETRY IS  
AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL. KAMALA DAS POETRY REVEALS HER EXPERIENCES, HER  
ANGUISHES AND HER FRUSTRATION. IT IS A MIRROR OF HER LIFE. KAMALA DAS  
ALWAYS DEALS WITH PRIVATE HUMILIATIONS AND SUFFERINGS WHICH ARE THE  
STOCK THEMES OF CONFESSIONAL POETRY. E.V. RAMAKRISHNA WRITES: THE  
FREE VERSE OF KAMALA DAS, BY AVOIDING THE CLICHES OF EXPRESSION, HER  
PERFECTED A WAY OF TREATING THE MOST INTIMATE EXPERIENCE WITHOUT  
EVER BEING SENTIMENTAL OR HAVING ANY TRACE OF POTHOS. INDIAN CRITICS  
HAVE FOUND IN HER POEMS THE VOICE OF THE NEW LIBERATED INDIAN WOMAN  
WITHOUT REALIZING THAT SHE NEVER SPEAKS AN BEHALF OF ANYBODY BUT  
HERSELF, LET ALONE ANY CLASS OR SECTION OF INDIAN SOCIETY. HER FRANK  
ADMISSION AND BOLD TREATMENT OF PRIVATE LIFE HAVE NOTHING EXEPTIONAL

ABOUT THEM AND ARE PERFECTLY IN KEEPING WITH THE NATURE AND THEMES OF CONFESSIONAL POETRY. AS CREATOR OF PERSONAL MYTHOLOGY, REDEFINING OF ONE'S IDENTITY FORMS A MAJOR CONCERN OF THE CONFESSIONAL POET."

IN THE END, KAMALA DAS AS A TYPICAL CONFESSIONAL POET WHO POURS HER VERY HEART INTO HER POETRY. SHE IS LARGELY SUBJECTIVE AND AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL, TORTURED, LETTING UP PEEP INTO HER SUFFERINGS AND TORTURED PSYCHE.

M.A. 4<sup>th</sup> SEM ENGLISH

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